

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Listening Session about the State of the Union
January 30, 2006

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We're all one day older than we were yesterday. In other words, **we are all aging**. Some of us may have started a bit earlier than others, but we're all aging. As Congressman John Lewis said in his recent address in Minneapolis celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, "We may have come here on different ships, but we're all in the **same boat** now."

Specifically:

1. Financial Security. Vigorous federal oversight of **pensions** is a must. Both public and private pensions are in jeopardy. We read about slashing or elimination of benefits far too often. People's lives are being ruined.
2. We read about it nationally: the Enron trial is beginning. Lives destroyed.
3. We read about it in Minnesota's private sector with NWA and other employers.
4. We read about it in the public sector such as with the Minneapolis Teachers pension fund.
5. Social Security is still with us and adjustments will have to be made. The privatization scheme of the Bush Administration has gone over like a lead balloon – and rightly so.

6. Federal **negotiation** of the price for prescriptions under Medicare is an absolute must. Not to do so defies logic. Indeed, the whole Part D program that is being implemented now is very **confusing** and **threatening** to retirees. Retirees are saying, Part D. **D** stands for **Dumb**.
7. There is no greater threat to the well being of retirees than the cost of health care. Indeed, there was an article in yesterday's Star Tribune about the ins and outs of **cutting pills in half** in order to save money. The Medicare program should be examined in the light of day rather than the lights of 3:00a.m., when the final bill was passed.
8. **Transportation** needs of retirees are great. As the population ages safety standards for vehicles as well as signage and lighting systems need to be updated to reflect an older driving population. **Mass transit** takes on a new dimension.

9. **Future Generations.** As we look at our children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren, we are concerned about what is going to happen to them. Specifically, the **federal deficit** absolutely needs to be reduced. We cannot continue to burden the next generations. Also, future generations deserve a **clean, healthy environment.**

Thanks you, Congresswoman McCollum, for listening to us.